

MONOCHROA NIPHOGNATHA GOZMÁNY, 1953
AND *ATHRIPS RANCIDELLA* HERRICH-SCHAEFFER,
1854 (LEPIDOPTERA: GELECHIIDAE),
NEW TO THE BRITISH FAUNA

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Monochroa niphognatha Gozmány

While moth hunting with Mr. R. G. Chatelain in some extensive fresh water marshes, at Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve, Kent, on the night of the 26th June 1984, two males of a gelechiid species of unfamiliar appearance were attracted between 10.30 and 11.00 p.m. to the Tilley lamp I was carrying. During the same period, about a dozen examples of the very local reed-feeding *Brachmia inornatella* Douglas (Lep.: Gelechiidae) also appeared at the lamp, a species seemingly new to East Kent (VC15) and only once before noted in the county.



Fig. 1 (top). *Monochroa niphognatha*, male, Stodmarsh, Kent, 26 June 1984, al. exp. 13 mm. Fig. 2 (bottom). *M. suffusella*, male, Wicken Fen, Cambridgeshire, 9 June 1921, al. exp. 13mm.

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Examination of the two unidentified specimens on the return home revealed a marked similarity to *Monochroa suffusella* Douglas, and on submitting them to Dr. Sattler (British Museum, Natural History), they were compared with the specimens of *M. suffusella* in the Museum and with the single example there of *M. niphognatha*. They appeared to conform to the latter, and examination of the genitalia confirmed they were in fact this new species to the British fauna, and so were exhibited as *M. niphognatha* at the meeting of the British Entomological and Natural History Society on the 12th July 1984. Having informed a friend, Mr. Norman Heal, of my good fortune at Stodmarsh, he proceeded to the locality on the 8th July, and there took a further two male *niphognatha* at light.

A description of the imago follows: Alar expanse 12-13 mm. Head whitish-ochreous. Forewings whitish-ochreous, becoming fuscous apically; discocellular stigma dark fuscous; subcostal oblong fuscous stigmata at $\frac{1}{6}$ and $\frac{1}{3}$; an indistinct, fuscous mid-plical mark. Hindwings pale grey. NB. *M. niphognatha* lacks the characteristic costal spot present in *M. suffusella* (see figure 2).

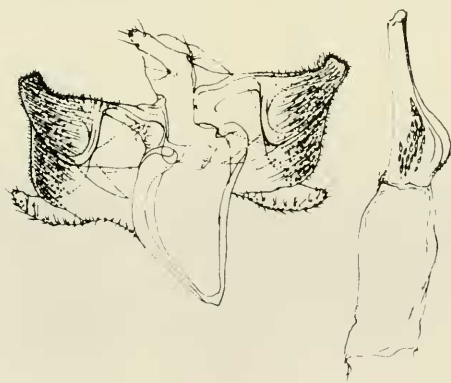


Fig. 3. *Monochroa niphognatha*, male genitalia

The species was first described from Hungary (Gozmány, 1953), since when it has been found in Sweden (Svensson, 1980) and Denmark — dates of capture, 27th June 1981, 18th June to 9th July 1982 (Buhl et al., 1981). The early stages are apparently unknown and its foodplant has yet to be discovered. However, in an interesting communication to me, Mr. I. Svensson (1984) writes: "*Monochroa niphognatha* seems to have had a good year in 1984, or possibly it is because of increased collecting in suitable localities. It was discovered in two more Swedish provinces: Blekinge and Öland. Most specimens were collected coming to mercury lamps,

but in 1983 I swept two worn specimens on 26.7, probably also the latest date in Sweden. The localities are always moist meadows with scattered *Salix*, some *Carex*, *Lysimachia vulgaris* and *Polygonum*, probably *amphibium*. Most Swedish collectors think *Lysimachia vulgaris* is the food-plant, but *Polygonum* could be considered. The two swept specimens were hiding in *Polygonum* stands".

In the order of classification *M. niphognatha* should be placed between *M. hornigi* Stdgr. and *M. suffusella* in Bradley, Fletcher & Hall-Smith (1979-83), and numbered 740a accordingly.

Athrips rancidella H.-S.

Since the 7th July 1971, I have collected over the years from my garden m.v. light trap at West Wickham, a number of specimens of a gelechiid that have remained unidentified until recently. These I submitted to Mr. E. S. Bradford, who was unable to identify them with any known British species. They were then shown to Dr. Sattler who recognised them as being referable to *Athrips rancidella* H.-S., a species new to the British list. The moth may have a fairly long period of emergence, since the earliest date of occurrence of my specimens is the 3rd June (1975), and the latest the 14th August (1984).



Fig. 4 (top). *Athrips rancidella*, male, West Wickham, Kent, 7-19 July 1971, al. exp. 14mm. Fig. 5 (bottom). *A. rancidella*, female, same data, al. exp. 13mm.

A description of the imago after Busck (1934) is as follows: Alar expanse 12-14 mm. Labial palpi dark fuscous, flecked with ochreous, especially on inner surfaces and on terminal joint. Antennae blackish fuscous with narrow light ochreous annulations. Face light fuscous mixed with ochreous. Head and thorax dark fuscous with each scale narrowly tipped with ochreous. Forewings uniformly dark fuscous, mixed with silvery white; each scale dark with base and extreme tip silvery; no other markings; cilia concolorous. Hindwings dark fuscous, a shade lighter than the forewings; cilia grey. Legs dark fuscous, tarsi with narrow ochreous annulations.

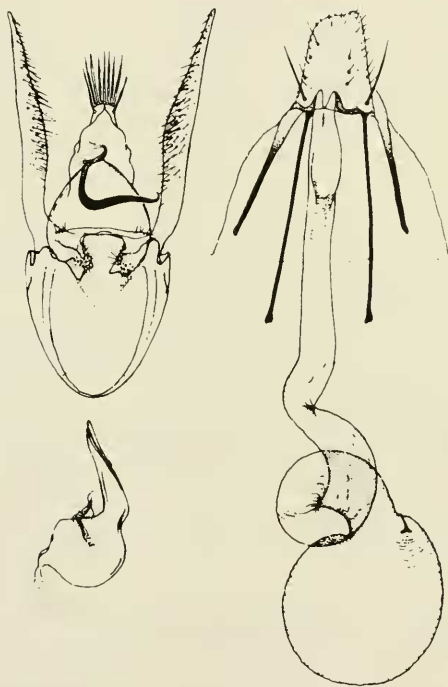


Fig. 6 *Athrips rancidella*, genitalia. Male (left), female (right).

Abroad the species is local in central and southern Europe (where its foodplants are stated to be *Prunus spinosa* and *Crataegus monogyna*), its range extending thence to Turkmeniya in Asiatic U.S.S.R. It is also recorded from Oregon, U.S.A., where it was bred from *Cotoneaster horizontalis*. Note: A *Cotoneaster* in my garden shows much evidence of larval feeding, the work I suspect of *A. rancidella*. However, I hope shortly to be able to confirm this and to report my findings in the pages of this journal.

A. rancidella should be placed between *A. tetrapunctella* Thunb. and *A. mouffetella* L. in Bradley, Fletcher & Hall-Smith (1979-83), and numbered 761a accordingly. The synonymy, after Leraut (1980), reads: *A. rancidella* H.-S., 1854; *triatomaea* Mühlig, 1864; *vepretella* Zell., 1870; *superfetella* H. de Peyerimhoff, 1877; *cotoneastri* Busck, 1934; *triatomca*, error; *cerasivorella* Kuznetzov, 1960.

Acknowledgements

I do thank Dr. Klaus Sattler for determining my examples of *M. niphognatha* and *A. rancidella*, as well as for his valued advice in the preparation of this paper. With regard to the illustrations, I am much indebted to Mr. Eric Bradford for drawing the genitalia, and to the Photographic Unit (BMNH) for photographing the specimens, and offer both my grateful thanks. I also thank Mr. Ingvar Svensson, who kindly wrote in reply to my letter requesting information, and the Nature Conservancy for permission to visit Stodmarsh.

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